

- Hall Will Ensure Dept. of Energy Hears Public's Concerns -

Monday, July 2, 2007

6:30pm – 8:00pm

Otisville Fire Department

60 State Street

Otisville, New York

Goshen, NY – U.S. Representative John Hall (D-NY19) will be holding a public meeting Monday, July 2nd for area residents to voice their concerns and formally submit comments on the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) proposal for a National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor (NIETC) in upstate New York that would help clear the way for New York Regional Interconnection's (NYRI) power line plan.

"The colossal, 200 mile long NYRI power line would steamroll land owners and threaten sensitive environmental areas," said Hall. "The communities that would be impacted by NYRI have a right to have their voices heard, and it's not reasonable or fair to expect local residents to trek across the state to express their views on a massive power line that's poised to run right through their back yard."

Hall is holding his own public meeting on the proposed power line corridor due to the DOE's failure to schedule a single public forum in any part of the Hudson Valley that would be directly impacted by NYRI's proposal for a nearly 200-milelong power line. Despite an official request made in late April by Congressmen Hall, Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), and Michael Arcuri (D-NY) "to hold the additional meeting(s) in upstate New York, closer to the 'source' area and communities along the proposed Mid-Atlantic Area National Corridor," the DOE has only scheduled public hearings for Rochester and New York City.

"It appears from the DOE's decision to only hold hearings hours away from where the NYRI line would run that they are trying to hide from the people who will actually be impacted," said Hall. "I'm holding my own public meeting to ensure that local residents concerns are heard on this matter, and together we will make sure DOE gets the message."

Hall has invited officials from the DOE to attend, but has also arranged for an official transcript to be taken of the event so that all comments from the public can be recorded and submitted to the DOE for the agency's consideration. Hall will also collect any written testimony that the public submits and deliver it to the DOE's headquarters in Washington, DC.

Hall has repeatedly expressed strong opposition to the DOE's proposal to create a Mid-Atlantic Area National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor in New York and other states throughout the Northeast that could allow New York Regional Interconnect (NYRI) and other private companies to utilize federal eminent domain to acquire private property and circumvent state authority to force massive and unsightly power lines upon New York residents.

A provision of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, passed by the Republican-led Congress, created new federal authority to site electric transmission lines throughout the country. Under the Act,

the Department of Energy may designate areas of the country as "National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors." Within these corridors, state authority over transmission lines may be preempted and new federal eminent domain authority could be used to obtain land for approved electric utility transmission projects such as the one proposed by NYRI. Hall is a co-sponsor of three pieces of bipartisan legislation, two of which were introduced by Hinchey, that would repeal or amend this section to ensure that the federal government does not overrule local and state officials and force the NYRI project upon New York residents.

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